

Section 2: Jefferson County Idaho

Profile of Jefferson County

Jefferson County was established February 18, 1913 with its county seat in Rigby. The County is located in southeastern Idaho and borders Madison County on the north and Bonneville County on the South. The Snake River is the county boundary between Madison and Jefferson Counties. The Snake River Riparian Area between Heise and Roberts comprises the majority of wildland/urban interface. The County primarily contains agricultural lands and borders the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory on the west.

Heise/Lorenzo Riparian Area

The Heise/Lorenzo Riparian area is located approximately 10 miles northeast of Rigby and includes the communities of Kelly Canyon, Heise, Sunnysdale, Archer, Labelle, Lorenzo, and Menan Buttes. The area can be reached by traveling north on Interstate 15 and exiting onto Highway 26 east. The Riparian area lies within Madison, Jefferson and Bonneville Counties along the bends of the Snake River. Elevations average 5,000 feet. BLM lands within the assessment area occur along the riparian lands of the Snake River and portions of the Menan Buttes and Kelly Canyon. Agriculture farming, rangeland and urban development are the primary uses of private lands within the Heise and Lorenzo communities.

Conservation Reserve Program Lands

The Conservation Reserve Program encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. Areas covered by CRP ground in Jefferson County total 4,183 acres.

Fire History:

According to the BLM and the Forest Service, between 1980 and 2003 there were 97 fire starts resulting in roughly 40,000 acres of land burned by wildfires in Jefferson County. Of the reported 97 fire starts, 40 were naturally started, usually through lightning strikes, and 57 were started by humans. The naturally started wildfires are typically located in the high desert areas of the county. There were two significant fires in the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory area in the 1990's. Both are reported to be human caused. The rural fire districts in the county do not retain records of acreage consumed in wildfires nor the number of annual responses.

